

QUALITY ASSURANCE

SUMMARY REPORT

for

SPRING MEADOW RESOURCES

2850 BROADWATER

HELENA, MT 59601

SUMMARY FOR PERIOD

May 2002-October 2004

by

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SCOPE OF REVIEW

The purpose of this summary is to evaluate the quality of services provided to individuals with developmental disabilities by Spring Meadow Resources. All service categories provided by the agency through contract were reviewed. Information was garnered through personal observation, interviews and review of documentation. The review is conducted as a requirement of quality assurance through contractual agreement between Spring Meadow Resources and the State of Montana.

The monitoring system used to evaluate the services provided has changed from annual to a more immediate assessment. The evaluator is now providing feedback throughout the period assessed. Observation reports have been forwarded to the service area managers as they are completed. During the covered period, only three reports were submitted requiring a written response. These were all related to staffing concerns and appropriate action was taken to correct the concern. This report is to serve as a summary of those ongoing observations.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Board Governance

Spring Meadow Resources, is a non-profit corporation, governed by a Board of Directors. The board is lead by Jim Turner, the current President. The board has gained new members, and is actively seeking others who wish to serve. Daily operation is under the direction of the Executive Director. In May of this year, the board decided not to renew their contract with the previous director. Rick Taylor took over the duties as interim Executive Director in June. The board met in September to make this change permanent. The corporation has stated a commitment to improving the quality of services provided for the individuals under their care.

Significant Events

There have been many changes in service provision during the period covered by this report. Some of the major accomplishments from the period are summarized below.

Spring Meadow entered a contract to operate the Lake Home. This home was built with private monies and designed to provide intensive services. The home was opened in the spring of 2004. Since that time, five individuals have moved into this six-person home.

The former Oregon group home was sold and services were moved to the facility at 900 North Oregon. This has resulted in individuals having more space and private rooms. In addition, the transitional living services were moved from the North Oregon facility to the renamed, Brass Apartments, at 700 Harris. The move has resulted in more focus on independent living skills for individuals in transitional services.

Other improvements noted during the period assessed. The kitchen area of the Waukesha home was remodeled and updated. Also the bathroom shower area at the Motor home was renovated to allow complete access.

In addition, two new vehicles were purchased. Both were vans, one is wheelchair accessible, meant to improve transportation services for individuals served. .

In December of 2001, Spring Meadow Resources was certified by CARF for the maximum three year period.

A previously developed corporate web page has been maintained through the evaluated period. It was noted during this assessment that the page could be updated to reflect recent changes. To further promote the agency, brochures and press releases have been utilized. Active participation in community activities continues to be the most effective manner for the agency and its consumers to be recognized as members of the Helena community.

Policies & administrative (DDP) directives

Spring Meadow was among the first agencies to implement suggested changes toward individualized funding. The contract for fiscal year 2004 included individualized cost plans for individuals in supported living services. The 2005 contract includes individual cost plans for individuals residing in congregate settings.

Staff members from Spring Meadow have served on work and study groups organized by the developmental disabilities program to recommend system changes. Examples of these included development of the assessment used for the Montana Resources Allocation Protocol (MONA) and the Reimbursement Advisory Committee.

Spring Meadow Resources has implemented the recommendations of the Developmental Disabilities regarding incident management. Critical incidents are investigated and recommendations made to rectify situations.

Licensing

The North Oregon complex and Lake House were both licensed as group homes during the evaluated period. In addition, the other homes operated by Spring Meadow maintained licensure through the covered period of this assessment.

Accreditation

As stated previously, Spring Meadow Resources was certified in December 2001 by CARF for the maximum three-year period.

Fiscal

Two desk reviews of audits by Galusha, Higgins and Galusha P.C. were examined. The audit reviews completed by Public Health and Human Services Audit and Compliance Bureau were dated September 2002 and October 2003. Results of both reports were determined acceptable, indicated no problematic concerns. Spring Meadow has implemented changes to facilitate compliance with rules published by Social Security for

representative payees. Another half-time position was added for a disbursement clerk to ensure individual accounts are accurate and secure. Spring Meadow continues to utilize and update software in the electronic medium to streamline efforts to monitor and improve the financial accounting system.

Appendix I

Changes were made to this area of the contract for the addition of staffing hired to operate Lake House. In addition, supplemental staff hired for CAP to facilitate the provision of intensive day services.

SPECIFIC SERVICES REVIEWED

Residential

Accomplishments

The highlight during the period of this assessment was the opening of Lake House. Although delayed by concerns of the county sanitarian, the residence is now home to five individuals. Movement of the former Oregon Home to North Oregon has provided enhanced the lives of individuals served there.

The movement of congregate supported living services to the newly named Brass Apartments has enabled individuals in these services to focus on transitional living skills.

The acquisition of two new vans provides additional transportation resources to better serve all individuals served by the agency.

Yearly sanitation reviews were unremarkable, with no deficiencies noted. Reviews for licensure were also approved and positive.

Programmatic Deficiencies

A concern was voiced by case management regarding the practice of service objectives being written as providing individuals with opportunities.

Areas of Spring Meadow fail to distribute individual planning documents in advance of the planning meeting.

A related concern is the availability of documentation related to quarterly reviews of objectives.

Corrections to Deficiencies

At the request of case management supervisors, Spring Meadow Resources has changed the manner in which service objectives were being written. Objectives to provide individuals with the opportunity to complete, participate, or initiate a task were dropped. New objectives are written to state the individual will complete, participate, or initiate, with data indicating what action of the individual occurred.

Spring Meadow management continues to stress the importance of submitting planning documents within the prescribed timelines. They have distributed calendars and continue other methods of addressing this issue.

The issue of timely quarterly objective reviews is a perennial issue. Training and schedules are somewhat effective. Often quarterly reports are lost in the review process. Efforts to improve the content of information included in the reports have been appreciated.

Health and Safety

Medication errors have seen an increase in the past several months. This is due in part to changes in pharmaceutical providers due to the closure of Reynolds Pharmacy. Solutions have included working closely with pharmacies and in some instances moving to another pharmaceutical provider. In addition to the incident management review, Spring Meadow also has a safety committee which meets regularly to review injury or accident reports and address concerns. This committee makes recommendations to avoid future incidents. Visits to Spring Meadows residential sites have found the facilities clean and well maintained. Individuality is expressed through decoration of personal space. For individuals in supported living services, safety checks are conducted quarterly to identify concerns. Sanitation and health needs are addressed through objectives in the individual's plan of care.

Service Planning and Delivery

Changes to the way in which objectives are written has occurred during the period assessed. Ongoing efforts are underway to ensure assessment information is available prior to the individual's planning. Implementation of individualized plans has not been a concern with this agency. Ongoing monitoring through the quarterly reports has seen some improvement.

Leisure and Recreation

Spring Meadow continues to promote activities through the agency and in the community. The agency continues to promote the Francis Dwyer Endowment to fund individual and social needs not available through the use of government funding. Individuals throughout the agency participate regularly in community activities. A partnership with the YMCA has provided fitness activities at the YMCA facility and in the Spring Meadow homes for less active individuals.

Spring Meadow does an excellent job in providing a variety of quality leisure and recreation activities for individuals in their service. The Country Club Program provides social and leisure opportunities for individuals. Although the community provides a variety of activity for all of its members, inclusion and acceptance will only occur through participation. Spring Meadow has made substantial effort in encouraging and enabling individuals to explore and participate in cultural activities throughout the Helena area.

Individuals living in congregate settings are offered in-house activities and community leisure activities. They are provided options and allowed a choice of activities. In addition, the staff facilitate and encourage holiday activities. Many individuals served by Spring Meadow Resources have been encouraged and assisted in saving, planning and going on a variety of vacation trips.

A regatta at the corporate pond is destined to become an annual event. There have been numerous improvements to enhance the pond and surrounding area as a recreational center. A windmill has been installed to aerate the water. Also, with the assistance of the Naval Reserve, a dock has been added.

Client Rights

The service delivery system has undergone numerous changes in the past several years. Efforts to allow choice of service provider and portability have provided an increased voice for the individuals served. The advent of person centered planning is certain to continue this trend. As an agency, Spring Meadow encourages and supports involvement in People First. For individuals to gain empowerment over their lives and services, it is important that staff know how to support their decisions without providing undue influence. This is an area of ongoing training for staff. Spring Meadow retains a Human Rights Council to review complaints regarding rights.

Medical / Health Care

Spring Meadow Resources works closely with health providers in the Helena community. The staff nurse, Becky Hornsby maintains a log of visits to health care providers. Ongoing communication has been important due to the restrictions on information as a result of the implementation of HIPPA guidelines.

Consumer Surveys

A review of consumer satisfaction surveys indicated general satisfaction with the services provided by Spring Meadow Resources. A new format is currently under development to provide a more user-friendly survey.

Staffing

Screening/Hiring

Spring Meadow Resources has undergone many staff changes over the past year. Overall, they have been able to hire and retain staff with few vacancies affecting staffing patterns noted. In spite of a statewide staffing shortage, Spring Meadow has been able to recruit qualified staff. Salaries remain competitive salaries in a field known nationally for the low salaries paid to direct care workers. Recently the organization has faced turnover of administrative staff. Movement in this area has now stabilized. Minimal disruption was noted due to promotions from within the agency. Observations of staff in the living environments and in meetings indicate that individuals are generally treated with dignity and respect. Observed interactions demonstrate a level of mutual respect between individuals and staff.

Spring Meadow staff overall demonstrate competence and dedication to the job of providing support to the individuals in their service. The requirements for written materials for planning and implementing the individual's plan may sometimes be overwhelming. Recognizing this, emphasis should be placed ensuring the direct care staff have an understanding of the planning process and the important role they have in facilitating the success of the individual's plan.

Orientation/training

Background checks are conducted on all new hires. New staff receive orientation training in which includes materials related to personnel issues, client rights, incident reporting and mandatory reporting for abuse or neglect, occupational safety and health (OSHA), First Aid and CPR and Mandt. This training is to be completed within one month of the hire date. In addition, staff who work in the intensive home are enrolled in DDCPT.

Ratios

Changes in staffing patterns have occurred with the expansion to include intensive level services. These changes have included additional staff in both residential and day services. Additional staff was also added to provide awake night supervision at the Oregon Home.

Staff Surveys

A review of surveys with staff indicate general satisfaction with their positions. It was noted that most find enjoyment in the duties and interactions that compose the direct care position. General satisfaction was also noted for the support and compensation provided.

APS

The evaluator consulted with adult protective workers regarding complaints received during the period of this assessment. Adult protective services indicated they had limited contact with the agency throughout the evaluated period. Of the investigations conducted, the adult protective workers were satisfied with the outcome.

Incident Management

The direct care staff generally do a good job of submit reports to their supervisory chain. On rare occasions, when awaiting further information, the report of an incident may not be written until a day or two after the occurrence. In these situations, the delay may be understandable. It has been agreed that phone contact with the Case Manager to provide notification of an incident is sufficient, with the written report to follow when completed. Staff are commended for their vigilance in submitting incident reports.

Spring Meadow is making efforts to implement the incident management system developed by the Developmental Disabilities Program. Administrative personnel

have received training and have begun the process of utilizing the new incident report form. Full implementation is expected at the beginning of 2005. The Quality Improvement Specialist of the Developmental Disabilities Program will make himself available to provide inservice training to staff on the incident reporting rules if requested.

Work/Day/Community Employment

Accomplishments

Spring Meadow has two day or work activity programs. The Creative Activities Program works with seniors and others with the focus on activity based services. Over the past year there has been a change in the clientele utilizing this service. With the addition of the intensive group home, the Creative Activities Program has also modified services to provide intensive services to two individuals from the home. Staffing adjustments were made to Appendix I of the contract to provide these services. The Career Advantage Program has also continued to expand its service enrollment. This is a vocational program which focuses on supported employment within the Helena community. The funding sources include Vocational Rehabilitation and the Developmental Disability Program. Currently three individuals are receiving vocational services funded through the Developmental Disability Program. Reports from case managers and supported individuals indicate general satisfaction with the program.

Individual Planning (Assessment, implementation, monitoring)

Planning and assessment are key components for the vocational program. Individual preferences are considered when identifying and seeking employment. The manager of this program works closely with individuals and their planning teams to accomplish successful vocational placement. This may include volunteer or unpaid work to develop skills necessary for sustained employment.

Programmatic Deficiencies

A criticism noted in both the day and work service is the lack of assessment materials provided prior to the individual's planning meetings. In addition, it was noted that quarterly reports of objectives were not always received in a timely manner.

The delivery of service at the Creative Activities Program is hampered by the size and design of the current facility. With the addition of younger, more intensive individuals receiving services through the program, the facility has become overcrowded.

Corrections to Deficiencies

A priority emphasis by Spring Meadow management on the importance of submitting planning documents within the prescribed timelines could alleviate some concerns. Past efforts, such as distribution of calendars indicating timelines for completion of documents, should continue. Other methods may include

monthly reviews by supervisors to identify individuals in need of completed assessment in the following month.

Management at Spring Meadow has approached the Board of Directors and received approval to build an additional building. Plans are currently being developed to create an environment to better meet the needs of the individuals served.

Community Supports

Accomplishments

Currently, four individuals have active Community Supports Agreements with Spring Meadow Resources. The agency has endeavored to meet individual needs through the implementation of services under this funding source. Examples include the purchase of adaptive furnishings or equipment enabling individuals to maintain independence or interact with their environment.

Services delivered in this realm are individualized. The oversight however, is the same. The same administrative personnel conduct screening and hiring of staff to provide the service. The supported living supervisor monitors planning and implementation of services. Agency and state policies regarding incident reporting and management are in effect.

Programmatic Deficiencies

The lack of assessment materials available prior to annual planning meetings and timeliness of data summaries were also found in some of the individuals served under this program.

Corrections to Deficiencies

The concern for timely assessment information is found in all areas. Suggestions for improvement have been included in previous sections of this report.

Transportation

Accomplishments

As noted previously in this report, Spring Meadow has purchased two new vans. One has been assigned to Lake house to provide essential transportation from the new home. The other has been utilized to provide additional seats for transportation throughout the agency.

The evaluator conducted visual examinations of the agency's vehicles. Staff reported, and the evaluator concurred, that noted defects were quickly corrected. Observations indicate that the vehicles appear to be well maintained

Programmatic Deficiencies

None were noted in this area.

CONCLUSION

The evaluator would like to thank the Spring Meadow staff for their cooperation and assistance throughout the period covered in this evaluation. Interactions with individuals receiving services through Spring Meadow have also been helpful. Based on this evaluator's observations, it is evident that the Spring Meadow staff are committed to providing quality services which improve the quality of life for the developmentally disabled persons in their charge.

Once again, the evaluator would like to express appreciation of past cooperation. In addition, he looks forward to a continuing relationship with the staff and individuals served by Spring Meadow Resources.

Findings Open / Plan of Correction

Two related findings of concern are noted in this report. First is the lack of assessment materials available prior to an individual's annual planning meeting. The second is the timely delivery of quarterly reports on objectives set at the planning meeting.

Spring Meadow management has undertaken numerous efforts to improve the timeliness of assessments and reports. The evaluator would suggest the addition of training to stress the importance of input from direct care personnel to the success of an individual's plan. As the front line provider of service, they are the direct observer of an individual's plan in action. It is their facilitation and observation that contributes to completing or modifying objectives so the individual's needs are being met.

Another area of concern is incident reporting. Staff should be reminded of the need to notify Case Managers via the telephone of serious incidents, such as those requiring hospitalization. The Incident Management Policy clearly states when such notification is necessary. In coordination with the full implementation of the Incident Management Policy, periodic staff training should be scheduled with the Spring Meadow reviewer and the Quality Improvement Specialist.

The remaining area of concern was the crowding at the Creative Activities Program. The addition of younger and more intense consumers has strained the capacity of the current facility.

Spring Meadow management has brought this concern to the Board of Directors. A request was approved for construction of a new facility has been approved. Building plans are currently being developed program with construction to begin in the spring.